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A Doll's Christmas

A Quaint Tale of Life in the Nursery When Little Boys and Girls Are All Sound Asleep

.....By LAWTON JOHNSON

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ONE Christmas eve a wax doll sat on a chair in a pretty room in which a number of children were in bed. A fire was burning on the hearth. Stockings were hanging to the mantel to be filled with toys for the children who were sleeping soundly, doubtless dreaming of what they were to receive in the morning. The face of one of them, a delicate, fair haired boy, was turned toward the doll, and she did not tire looking at it, for the face, though pale and thin, was very delicately molded.

On the mantel were two figures in porcelain. One was a boy in an old fashioned coat and knee breeches, with a sash around his waist and a cocked hat and feather. His right hand was thrust into his coat in front, and he looked like a figure of Napoleon. The other was a girl, with a short dress and a sailor hat. Her head was poised one side, and she looked very well satisfied with herself. Indeed, she was very pretty.

"How do you do?" said the girl image to the doll. "Don't you think this a pleasant room?"

"Indeed it is, but I've not seen many. I was only born"—She paused to

other children. The doll noticed that he had great blue eyes, which seemed ever so large as he looked wonderingly at all that was going on. Then there came a knocking on the wall, and the children knew that it was a signal for them to get back to bed and not take cold, and back they scrambled, laughing and tumbling over one another, and covered themselves up.

Presently the father and mother came in and distributed the toys. The doll was for one of the girls, but the boy insisted on having it himself. Then when all were loaded with presents they carried them down to the breakfast room.

What a day it was! The children were racing about, playing with their toys, and people were coming in continually to see the presents, and the sun shone brightly on the snow outside, and the fire shone brightly within on the brass andirons and fender, and after dinner stories were told the children till they were all astonished by the number of wonderful things that happen. The boy with the light hair and blue eyes lay in his mother's arms, hugging the doll with her breast pressed against his, so that she could



"SANTA CLAUS HAS BEEN HERE."

on the mantel. "It's just as well; the world isn't all like this household."

"It's just as well," echoed the girl image. "Your beauty will not have to fade."

"I don't want to go," cried the doll mournfully. "I want to stay with my blue eyed boy. The world may be full of sadness, but there must be pleasure as well, for it is here."

There was something so plaintive in her voice that even the images refrained from any further remarks. The fire blazed hotter, and the wax, which had as yet only softened, began to melt. Something splattered on the floor. It was a drop of melted wax.

Oh, that her little boy would get up and move her back from the fire! But he slept on peacefully, and as she had no voice for real children she couldn't call to him.

So the doll felt that she was melting away. Drop by drop she fell on the floor. The room, with its rich hangings, the children sleeping, the firelight flickering, the shadows and, above all, the memory of her brief existence—for, after all, a doll can only exist—seemed to be gradually fading away. She sighed to think that she couldn't have been born with a soul, to be loved and go on loving forever; that she could not grow up like a real child to see the unfolding of all the wonderful things in the world, passing from one existence to another instead of going out altogether. Then she thought that she might never have been born at all, never have had the one glimpse of the happy household, the one Christmas,

the blue eyed boy and her single day of love. So she said: "I can't understand it. I will try not to murmur, but trust that it is all for the best."

And then—and then she awoke! The horror of melting had only been a dream. She had fallen asleep before the hot fire, but some kind hand had drawn the chair back, and in a few moments she was again clasped in the fond arms of her blue eyed boy.

CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO.

How the Day is Celebrated in the Land of Diaz.

In Mexico Christmas eve is observed, as in Spain, with the Noche Buena. The streets and plazas are thronged with people. Of all the shop windows so gay and brilliant in their holiday attire none is so bright as the confectioner's. Nowhere is the confectioner's art carried to a greater perfection. At midnight of the Noche Buena all Mexico forsakes its pleasures and repairs to the Misa del Gallo, or mass of the cock, a high mass of the most imposing character, which, in every one of the magnificent temples reared by the Catholic church in the City of Mexico, is celebrated exactly at midnight on Christmas eve or morning to commemorate the Saviour's birth. All the churches have an augmented choir and a large orchestra specially engaged for the occasion. The mass is celebrated with every concomitant that can heighten its effect and grandeur.

The Gift I Didn't Get

A Christmas Poem by Peter McArthur

Copyright, 1904, by Peter McArthur



A Girl Who Calls Me Friend

I HAVE presents by the dozen,
Meant to make my Christmas glad,
From each aunt, uncle and cousin—
Best a fellow ever had.
There's a keepsake from my mother,
Father sent a check—and yet
I am thinking of another—
Of the one I didn't get.

THERE are gifts from all the fellows,
Pipes and things a chum will send;
There's a tie, all reds and yellows,
From a girl who calls me friend.
You would think me far from slighted
If you saw them all—and yet,
I confess, I'm most delighted
With the one I didn't get.

SHE told me it was ready,
She'd prepared it long before
I'd been calling on her steady
For at least a year or more.
She told me all about it,
And her eyes with tears were wet,
And I'm happy, never doubt it,
For that gift I didn't get.

HER attitude was altered
When I called on her last night,
But my tale of love I faltered,
And I guess I did it right.
And this little rhyme is written
'Cause I'm full of joy—you bet!
For a frosty little mitten
Was the gift I didn't get.

The Christmas Tree

How It Originated,
How It is Secured
For the Market, and
Some Interesting Legends of the Dim Past

By
WALTON WILLIAMS

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THE Christmas tree goes so far back into the light of time that it is quite impossible to tell where or by whom it was first introduced. Almost every country has its legend claiming for its own the tree which bears such generous fruit. In Scandinavia it is said to have sprung from the "service tree," which germinated from soil soaked by the blood of two unfortunate lovers, a claim substantiated by the statement that at Christmas the inextinguishable lights gleamed from its green branches. In a French romance of the thirteenth century a great tree is described whose branches are covered with burning candles and on whose top is the vision of a child with a halo round its head, the tree and candles representing mankind and the child the infant Saviour.

A beautiful German story credits St. Winifred with giving the Christmas tree to the world. The story is illustrative of the gospel supplanting paganism. Before a group of converts St. Winifred felled a great oak which had been an object of the worship of the Druids. A fine young fir tree immediately appeared in its place, on seeing which St. Winifred said: "This lit-

The Greeks also call Christmas the Feast of Lights.

The Romans in their saturnalia decorated trees with images of Roman gods as well as with candles and burned Yule logs in honor of these gods. The early Christians, however, frowned upon all such pagan adjuncts to the Christmas celebration. With them the Feast of the Nativity was the extreme of solemnity, and they were as much opposed to Christmas trees and lights, music and laughter, as were the Puritans.

The first authentic account of the Christmas tree is not recorded until the sixteenth century. It appears in a German manuscript, and, as the Germans responded least to Latin influences of all the nations which fell heir to the Roman empire's lands, to them rather than to the Romans must be ascribed the honor of introducing it. It was the marriage of Queen Victoria to a German prince which brought the modern Christmas tree to England, and a German immigrant started the custom in America. The first Christmas tree in France was lighted in the Tuilleries in 1840 by the Duchess Helena.

To view the great heaps of Christmas trees which line the market streets of our big cities just before the holidays one would fancy that scarcely a tree could be left standing of the numbing hemlocks which constituted Longfellow's forest primeval. Every hard timber state in the Union is tributary to Santa Claus for its tribute of redolent balsam that he may have plenty of places on which to hang his gifts.



TAKING HOME THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

There is only one true Christmas tree—the balsam fir. The hemlock proper has branches too drooping and flexible to hold a great weight of Christmas gifts, and the spruce, while otherwise suitable, lacks the spicy odor of the balsam. This is fortunate, for the tree most prized for Christmas purposes is utterly despised by the lumbermen. Before the Christmas tree industry began the fir lands of Maine were actually exempted from taxation as worthless. Now they are worth from \$10 to \$15 an acre.

The Christmas tree enters begin work early, usually about the middle of October. While some of the men are cutting others follow them and drag the trees to the nearest open space, where they are bunched and tied so that they will not come apart in shipping. At the nearest depot they are loaded on cars, 2,500 trees to the car. The men receive \$1.50 a day and board. It takes seven men working five weeks to get out three carloads.

The Christmas tree output depends a good deal on the weather. With an open fall, when the trees are easy to get at, the crop will be much larger than when the snow falls early and heavily. If the snow melts and then freezes on the branches it makes them brittle, and they break in transit.

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THE MYSTIC MISTLETOE.

Once a Feature of Pagan Rites, It Now Belongs to Lovers.

From time immemorial the white berried mistletoe has played a leading part in Yuletide festivities, though it has not always conveyed the osculatory privileges which give it its value in the eyes of the romantic youth of today. Like so many other features of the Christmas celebration, mistletoe has been borrowed from the pagans of antiquity and Christianized by the lapse of centuries. The Persians before the birth of Christ used the mistletoe in their sacred rites, and in parts of India pagan priests still incorporate it in their ritual. It figures largely in Scandinavian mythology. Baldur, the son of Odin, though a demigod, was slain by a spear of mistletoe, a proof of its magic powers.

It is from the Druids of old England, however, that mistletoe has come to us. The Druidical priests, sprung, it is said, from the magi of the east, the wise men who worshipped at the cradle of the infant Saviour, held the mistletoe as their most sacred possession, and the cutting of the pretty parasite from the oak, the tree which the Druids claimed God loved more than any other, was attended with the greatest solemnity. On the Druids' festival day a grand procession, leading two white oxen, moved to the mystic grove. There the oxen were fastened to the oak by their horns, and a white robed priest climbed into the leafless branches and cut the bunches of mistletoe with a golden knife. The oxen were then sacrificed and religious services performed, after which the procession returned to the temple in the forest and the mistletoe was deposited in the Druidical arcanum.

Besides taking its place in the religious observances of the Druids, the mistletoe, which the priests gave a name meaning "all healing," was made into many curious decoctions by processes in which times and seasons and incantations were supposed to add to its mysterious powers. These medicines were regarded as cures for human ills generally, whether of mind or body. With the advance of civilization and the death of superstition mistletoe has lost its religious character, but not its popularity, and the forests of England and of our own southern states are as eagerly frequented by mistletoe gatherers as ever were the dark woods of the ancient Druids.

CHRISTMAS IN SWEDEN.

One Day When There Are Neither Rich Nor Poor.

If you were in Sweden on Christmas eve you would hear the church bells begin to ring at 5 o'clock, for everybody stops work then and the festivities begin in great earnest everywhere in the kingdom. Class distinctions are forgotten and servants are allowed to sit at table with the family. After supper comes the universal Christmas tree, for Sweden is one of the early homes of it is beautiful custom.

On Christmas morning at 6 o'clock, while it is still dark, you would go to church, for everybody goes, unless you stayed at home to mind the lights in the house, for every home in the kingdom is illuminated. There is almost sure to be a deep snow, and you would go to church in a sleigh. Behind every sleigh you would see two boys standing on the runners and holding pine torches—a beautiful spectacle as a long procession of sleighs glides over the snow on a forest road. These torches are stuck up in a circle around the church. A whole week is given to good cheer and hospitality.

A Friendship Calendar.

A friendship calendar as a Christmas gift was a source of much pleasure to an elderly lady living alone, says Good Housekeeping. At her request each one of fifty-two of her friends, representing the fifty-two weeks of the year, furnished material for every day of the seven in his week. Each one followed out his own idea for the week's calendar, contributing favorite quotations, short poems, anecdotes and reminiscences, some even adding cherished recipes. In many instances the contributions were original. Others were illustrated with small pictures cut from current magazines. The result was a perpetual calendar, each day representing the loving thought of a friend.

A Christmas Game.

"Christmas candles" is a good old time game. A lighted candle is placed upon a table. The players blindfolded and stationed with him back to the candle, about a foot from it. He's then told to take three steps forward, turn around three times, then to walk four steps toward the candle and blow it out. His attempt to do so will probably be as amusing to the audience as disconcerting to himself.—Country Life in America.

The Line Drawn.

Ethel—What do you intend to give me for Christmas?
Bertie—Would a kiss answer?
Ethel (with sarcasm)—No, indeed! Mamma never allows me to accept valuable presents from gentlemen.

Vacancy.

There's Christmas smiling in the sky,
There's Christmas in the trees,
There's Christmas in the streets near by,
There's Christmas in the breeze.

It's Christmas, Christmas everywhere,
No matter where you look,
Beware when you gaze with mild despair
Into your pocketbook.

—Washington Star.

Christmas Bills.

The Christmas bills
Give dad the chills;
He'll never climb
The heavenly hills
Nor wear the angels'
Wings on frills
Because of them
Some Christmas bills!

—Atlanta Constitution.